

Speech for Installation  
Professor Stephen Morgan  
Rector  
University of Saint Joseph, Macao  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020

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Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever.

I stand before you this afternoon with a profound sense of honour at having been appointed Rector of the University of Saint Joseph: a sense of honour but chiefly one of gratitude.

My thanks, under God, are first to Bishop Stephen Lee and the Catholic Foundation for Higher Education in Macao for appointing me. To my own Bishop, Bishop Philip Egan of the Diocese of Portsmouth, for giving permission for me to continue to serve outside my own diocese. Thank you too to Professor Isabel Gil for her kind encouragement and that generous message. I am grateful to my colleagues in the Faculty of Religious Studies and to the students of that faculty for the privilege of having been their Dean and for their prayerful support and encouragement. There are many who, because of the pandemic, cannot be here today and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude too – my friends, of course, but primarily my family – who will be watching this in the UK. My mother and father will, I hope, have been able to get the technology to work as they shelter in lock-down at home in Britain: to them I say, in the language of our little land of Wales, “Diolch yn fawr iawn am bopeth”, thank you very, very much for everything. My three fine children, too, deserve my gratitude, not least for putting up with my failings as a father. Peter, Sophia and Hugo, remember that you all carry the name of St Francis Xavier, who so much wanted to come to China and who died so close to here, on Sanchuang Island. Ask him to guard and guide you and intercede for me. Most of all, however, I want to thank my wife, Caroline. How I wish you could be here at my side today. Remember, CJ, it was thirty years ago tomorrow, that you agreed to marry me and know that without your belief in me and your loving-support across those years, I simply would not be standing here. Thank you, my darling girl.

It is not my intention to detain you this afternoon any longer than is absolutely necessary. The main business of this afternoon’s installation has already taken place with the various parts of the installation ceremonies that have been so meticulously planned by Ms Paula Mota and her team and which have been so well explained by our MCs. I do, however, want to say one or two things that are – I think – important.

In assuming the office of Rector, I am acutely conscious that anything that I am going to be able to achieve will be built on the foundations laid by Fr Peter. I want to put on record here and now my thanks and those of all at USJ to him for everything he has managed to achieve over the last eight years. I also want to add my personal gratitude for the many kindnesses he has shown me since I joined the University and for his openness and wisdom during the last two months as we have prepared for this handover.

As some of you know, that my doctorate concerned the theology of the development of Christian Doctrine in the work of St John Henry Newman. What impressed itself most strongly on my mind during that work was the fine balance Newman sought to establish between continuity and change: continuity of identity, of essence, and change always understood as being at the service

of that continuity. So, I hope it will be for me as Rector. Change there will be, of course – that always happens with a change of leadership – but that change will always be undertaken with the intention of preserving and strengthening the identity and mission of the University.

The identity and mission of the University of Saint Joseph are not entirely things we determine for ourselves. They are, in many ways, given to us. They are given to us in the first place by the Catholic Church: we are a Catholic University, born from the heart of the Church; a heart that beats with the Eucharistic love of Christ and finds expression in the service of all, especially of the poor and marginalised. Our Chancellor, who is Chancellor precisely because he is the Bishop of Macao, the chief shepherd of the Catholic Church here, has asked me to ensure that this Christ-like service remains our first priority in everything we are and everything we do at USJ.

Our identity and mission are also given to us by our students. In all that we do, we are conscious that our particular service is in the education and formation of the men and women who choose to come to this place. They come to us with an expectation that their time here will change their lives for the better. For our part, we know that when they graduate from USJ we will have done everything in our power to ensure that they are men and women of the highest personal integrity, who can think rigorously, critically and creatively, who instinctively work collaboratively, who value engagement with those of other cultures, nationalities and beliefs, people who seek always to move beyond mere proficiency to mastery of their chosen discipline and who can operate with ease in English and at least one other language.

Our identity and mission are given to us by location: we are a Catholic University in Macao and we are honoured, privileged indeed, to receive such significant support from the Government of Macao. Recently, the Chief Executive, the Honourable Mr Ho Iat Seng, delivered his first policy address which set out his vision of the future for Higher Education here. I would ask Ms Secretary Ao-Ieong U to convey our thanks to him: first for sending you as his representative to this ceremony; and second for the clear, well-thought-out and exciting direction he set for the universities in that policy address. Please assure him that we at USJ welcome and warmly embrace his vision.

Our identity and mission are given to us by our wider-national context too. The University of Saint Joseph is a Catholic University in and of China. In all we do we must aim to foster a greater knowledge and genuine love of China in our students. We are also a University with roots deep in the history of the Portuguese-speaking world. With our sister University, the Catholic University of Portugal, we are committed to deepening and broadening the encounter – already half a millennium old – between China and the Lusophone-world.

Although these aspects of our identity and mission are given to us and received as a pearl of great price, treasure held upon a sacred trust, we are not mere passive recipients. We have a responsibility to develop them according to our strengths and prudential wisdom. Our staff – academic and administrative – know well and are deeply committed to this and I can do no more than promise them all, my untiring efforts as a colleague and as a servant-leader, as together we undertake this work.

No one individual can lead a University without the support and collaboration of a strong team. Dr Raymond Lam has been the Administrator of the University for the last two years and, in his quiet, unassuming way, has transformed the way in which many of the offices of the University function. I have asked him to take up a new role in the University, as Director of Operations. This

will be particularly important as we aim to make the most of our physical and virtual environment over the next few years. I have asked Dr Alejandro Salcedo to become the Administrator in succession to Dr Lam.

Professor Rochelle Ge has done a remarkable job as Vice-Rector. She cannot be with us today, since she is at home in Jiangsu Province supporting her parents. She has asked to be allowed to return to full-time academic work in her faculty, to develop her teaching and research. Professor Ge is a very persuasive woman and, reluctant to lose her, as I am, I have acceded to her request. I will be seeking to appoint a Vice-Rector to take up her responsibilities, especially those related to our institutional relationships with the Government of Macao, the Liaison Office and with the National Government. I hope to be able to announce that appointment soon. As we strengthen and develop our post-graduate teaching, which so many within the University and outside it have identified as a particular strength and priority, I will, in time, be seeking to appoint a Vice-Rector for Research.

I cannot adequately express how grateful I am to Vice-Rectors Professors Álvaro Barbosa and Keith Morrison for their having agreed to provide the necessary continuity in the senior leadership of USJ in this time of change. Over the last few months we have had long, wide-ranging, often challenging conversations about the way in which we can take the University forward over the next few years. I am glad that they will continue as Vice-Rectors: Professor Barbosa with particular responsibility for internationalisation and strategic development; Professor Morrison leading on Academic Affairs and as Registrar.

I have trespassed on your patience long enough today: for now, I would simply say, again, how honoured I am to be the fourth rector of USJ, how conscious I am of the size and scale of the task ahead and how much I will need the support of family and friends, colleagues and students in this work. If you are one who prays, storm heaven with your prayers so that God might grant me, grant us, grant USJ the graces we need for this work He has committed to us. And, if you are one who does not pray, think kindly of us at the University of Saint Joseph: know that we are people of goodwill and know too that we are conscious of and grateful for your friendship.

Thank you.